

LOS ANGELES—Today local members of Congress called on Governor Jerry Brown to join the governors of New York, Illinois and Massachusetts and suspend California's participation in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Secure Communities program. At a press conference in downtown Los Angeles, Representatives Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Judy Chu (CA-32) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34) were joined by former Los Angeles police chief and current City Councilmember Bernard C. Parks (CD-8) and Councilmember Jan Perry (CD-9) to make the announcement. On Tuesday, June 7, Councilmember Parks authored a resolution passed by the City Council with a near-unanimous vote that calls for the city to have the right to opt-out of the program.

Rep. Becerra is joined by Rep. Chu, Rep. Roybal-Allard, Councilmember Parks, and Councilmember Perry at a press conference on Secure Communities at Los Angeles City Hall, June 10, 2011. [Click here to view video](#) .

Rep. Becerra said: **"Our police officers have done a tremendous job to reduce crime and preserve law and order throughout our city—in large part, by gaining the trust and confidence of all the people of Los Angeles, regardless of immigration status. Unfortunately, Secure Communities, as it is being implemented, is breaking that trust. ICE has blurred the lines of the program, deporting people who report or witness crimes, not just those convicted of committing them. Until Secure Communities can live up to its own mission of deporting convicted criminals—and not innocent bystanders and victims—it is a threat and detriment to the security of our communities. The time has come for Governor Brown to move to suspend our state's participation in Secure Communities."**

Rep. Roybal-Allard said: **"No one disputes that our government should target immigrants**

who commit serious crimes for deportation. But instead of focusing on the worst offenders, Secure Communities casts an indiscriminant net which has ensnared thousands of hard-working, law-abiding men and women. As a result, fewer witnesses are coming forward and more victims are choosing to suffer in silence. Governor Brown understands that our state needs smarter policing, not stricter immigration enforcement. He should side with both the officers who patrol our communities and the people they protect and end Secure Communities in California."

Rep. Chu said: "The people on the front lines of the Secure Communities program, our police officers, have expressed serious concerns about its implementation. Chief Beck himself has noted that the program is causing a breach of trust between the LAPD and our immigrant communities, hindering our officers' duty to protect and serve all of our residents. And the numerous reports of domestic violence victims being detained through this program are simply unacceptable. If a program is causing a victim of violence to fear deportation for merely reaching out for help, then that program is causing more harm than good."

Councilmember Parks said: "As a former LAPD chief and now a city councilmember representing a very diverse district, I know firsthand the importance of fostering positive relationships between community members and law enforcement officers that lead to the sharing of critical information in reporting and solving crimes. By requiring local law enforcement agencies to participate in a deportation program that targets not just dangerous criminals, but also innocent victims and low-level offenders, it prioritizes immigration enforcement – a federal responsibility – over maintaining public safety – a local responsibility. It is not, nor should it be LAPD's job to enforce immigration laws, and certainly not at the expense of the safety and security of the residents of Los Angeles."

Councilmember Perry said: "In Los Angeles, our police officers have worked for decades to create close relationships with community members built on mutual trust. Secure Communities may threaten these relationships and, in turn, have a detrimental effect on public safety. For this reason, I join our local Congressmembers in urging Governor Brown to suspend California's participation in Secure Communities until its effects on local law enforcement efforts can be studied."

At the press conference, Rep. Becerra released a [letter](#) to Gov. Brown from the Los Angeles Congressional delegation and signed by the members in attendance. A copy of the letter is below:

The Honorable Jerry Brown

Governor of the State of California

State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

As members of the Los Angeles Congressional Delegation, we write to urge you to suspend California's participation in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Secure Communities program until DHS's Inspector General's Office completes its investigation of the program. We believe that the DHS Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) current implementation of this program is contrary to the Secure Communities Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed with the State of California's Identification Bureau. ICE's implementation is undermining California law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute individuals who have committed serious criminal offenses.

Although we support the purported goals of the Secure Communities program, there is strong evidence that ICE has failed to meet the program's objective to "identify, detain and remove from the United States aliens who have been convicted of a serious criminal offense and are subject to removal." Rather, the program has led ICE to take into custody many individuals who do not meet the stated criteria of the program.

ICE's data shows that in Los Angeles County, more than a quarter of those arrested and taken into ICE custody had not been charged of a crime. Moreover, nearly half (45.87%) of the individuals taken into ICE custody from LA County had not committed a crime or had only been charged with a low-level offense. The ICE data demonstrate that ICE is acting contrary to the MOA.

In a recent interview with a local Los Angeles radio station, Los Angeles Chief of Police Charlie Beck warned of the chilling effect the program will have on the reporting of crime in Los Angeles. He went on to say that there was a "crisis of confidence" in Secure Communities.

If Chief Beck is correct that the program is causing a deterioration of trust between the Los Angeles Police Department and local immigrant communities, this could increase the threat of crime rather than reduce it as was the intention of the Secure Communities program. Several California newspapers have reported on victims of domestic violence who have been placed into deportation proceedings as the result of Secure Communities when they simply called the police for help.

Once again, we urge you to suspend California's participation in Secure Communities. With several of your fellow governors from Illinois, New York and Massachusetts ending their participation in the Secure Communities program, suspending participation in the program pending the DHS Inspector General report is a prudent action.

We look forward to working with you and finding ways to truly make our communities safer and working towards comprehensive immigration reform. And we look forward to the opportunity to discuss this matter with you.

Sincerely,